



Diálogo

Volume 17 | Number 2

Article 53

2014

Wearing Her Wrangler Jeans and Payless Penny Loafers; My Grandfather Would Say

Yaccaira Salvatierra

Follow this and additional works at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/dialogo>



Part of the [Latin American Languages and Societies Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Salvatierra, Yaccaira (2014) "Wearing Her Wrangler Jeans and Payless Penny Loafers; My Grandfather Would Say," *Diálogo*: Vol. 17 : No. 2 , Article 53.

Available at: <https://via.library.depaul.edu/dialogo/vol17/iss2/53>

This Rincón Creativo is brought to you for free and open access by the Center for Latino Research at Via Sapientiae. It has been accepted for inclusion in *Diálogo* by an authorized editor of Via Sapientiae. For more information, please contact digitalservices@depaul.edu.

Yaccaira Salvatierra

MEXICAN/PERUVIAN AMERICAN

Wearing Her Wrangler Jeans and Payless Penny Loafers

God is a Mexican woman
driving across the San Diego-Tijuana border
in a lightly dented and dusted
1980s sky blue Dodge Ram Van—
a hand-me-down gift from a couple
she nannied for in San Marino, California
that still think of her as the most loving caregiver
with that I-wish-she-would-have-stayed nostalgia,
but she now has her own
ten and eleven-year-old children,
Miguelito and Gabriela, who sit
in the back seat with a six-year-old boy
from Hidalgo, Mexico,
his small head resting on Miguelito's lap
pretending to be asleep
when Gabriela speaks
in her accented English, answers
how old she is, where she lives,
what school she goes to, favorite subject,
who the lady driving is—*my mom*,
the boy sleeping—*my little brother*,
and like that
the patrol agent makes a hand gesture
for them to pass through the gate
where they will continue driving
to the boy's parents waiting in Pomona.

My Grandfather Would Say

"After all, we all die, and God will be waiting for you;
He won't be looking at the holes on the bottoms of your shoes
or the duct tape you cover them with when it rains.

He won't compare your small stature—nourished on blocks
of government cheese and powdered milk—to others because

somehow it all disappears: shoes, cheese and milk, the duct tape.
Only the tools that belonged to you will leave with you:
the chisel and mallet of your heart, the ink coming off the page.

He will ask you to drop your shawl just like Juan Diego did,
so the roses of your life, evidence that you loved, appear."

The day my grandfather died, his strong arms sank
into the sides of his chest, tired, relieved; and his legs
that once walked down rows of California orchards, collapsed.

That night, I dreamed his soul struggled as it inched its way out
of his skin until his body looked like a pile of dirty work clothes.

I saw him ascend towards the dark dome of the sky,
pass through one of the small openings I knew as a star,
and stand at the top of a desert mountain. Then, he untied

a white burlap sack from around his neck and let
oranges, strawberries, and grapes fall to the ground.